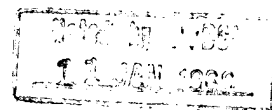
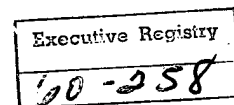


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REPORT OF THOMAS E. MURRAY  
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY  
REGARDING DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL MADE BEFORE THE  
INSTITUTE OF WORLD AFFAIRS  
ON DECEMBER 9th, 1959



In accordance with your request, I am submitting this memorandum in order to present further details regarding the disarmament proposal which I made on December 9th before the Institute of World Affairs at Pasadena.

A proposal of this kind, set forth within the limits of a short speech, is bound to raise questions concerning its implications for national security. As a matter of fact I was prompted to advance the suggestion for dismantling megaton weapons on a matching basis with the Soviets only after pondering for a long time the potentially grave security dangers that lurk in current American disarmament policy--dangers which will become vivid enough if we persist in our present course. The official nuclear disarmament policy to which the Government is committed calls eventually for a negotiated agreement: first, to stop all nuclear tests; second, to halt the flow of fissionable material into weapons and finally to destroy all nuclear stock-piles. The carrying out of this current policy is made contingent on the establishment of effective international inspection and control.

The main reason behind my proposal is the urgent need to design a practical alternative policy which will permit the U.S. to seize the initiative in the field of disarmament without impairing national security.

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Our present disarmament policy is mistaken in its basic premise. We should never have yielded to Communist pressure and put the subordinate issue of tests in the first place on the disarmament agenda. Moreover, our efforts to negotiate a test ban and to contrive an inspection system to control its observance, have proved to be a political failure. What is worse the test moratorium has damaged American military strength. And more crippling damage would result if our present policy were carried through its further two stages. It is imperative that this ineffective, mistaken and dangerous policy be discarded and a new start made.

The real and immediate problem is not to halt future weapons development by stopping tests, but to banish the present threat of unlimited violence and universal devastation that is posed by megaton weapons already in American and Soviet stockpiles. Here is the proximate issue, to be handled without delay. Until we negotiate an agreement to extinguish the threat of world-wide nuclear holocaust, all other kinds of disarmament negotiations will be certainly futile and no less certainly dangerous.

Hence I proposed an orderly destruction, on a matching basis, of existent megaton weapons, under international supervision.

The proposal has a political goal. It aims at terminating a situation that has become politically absurd, both from the Communist viewpoint and from our own. I mean the situation in which world peace is ultimately based on a balance of terror. This situation makes no political sense to anyone concerned in it and all the peoples of the world are concerned in it.

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Therefore I propose, as the primary and most necessary practical goal, that we negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Union to stop the perilous and irrational effort to maintain the balance of terror. An agreement to this effect would be as much in the Communist interest as in our own. Hence it appears as possible and practical.

This goal is limited, as all political goals must be. There would remain, both for the U.S. and for the U.S.S.R., the problem of maintaining a balance of power between the Communist world and the free world. This problem has as many aspects as the word "power" has meanings. In any case, it is a genuine political problem that can be rationally and successfully handled. A true balance of power, in all the many meanings of power is a necessary contributing element of world peace, whereas the present precarious balance of terror is nothing but an invitation to catastrophe.

Thus the proximate political goal is clear enough. It is a question, not of upsetting the balance of terror, which would entail serious risk, but of dissipating the terror itself.

Therefore the process whereby this limited political goal may be achieved is likewise clear enough. It is a question of initiating an orderly and controlled process of destroying the megaton weapons that have created, and still sustain the terror. The final details of the process are proper matter for negotiation, once the end in view is agreed on.

First of all, I think that any proposal, laid down by the U.S. as the basis of negotiation, should be kept clear, clean and simple, free of the kind of detail that might give rise to resistance or bickering, whether on political or on scientific grounds.

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For instance, we need not be particular about the composition of the international commission to supervise the dismantling of Russian and American megaton weapons. It is sufficient that the scientific staff be competent. It would be advisable to have them work under a political committee with the widest representation. What is chiefly important is that the work be done, as it were, under the eyes of all the world. Access to all the details of the operation should be open to all the media of communications.

The really essential question concerns the method by which this proposal should be carried out. In the first place, the dismantling process should take place in stages. The first stage is an important one. Enough megatonage should be destroyed in it to affirm emphatically and at the outset a mutual seriousness of intent to end the Era of Terror. What would constitute such a quantity of megatonage? The immediate answer to this question may be reached by asking another. How many megatons would be sufficient to create, if exploded, a serious threat to civilization disaster on a scale intolerable both to ourselves, the legatees of Western civilization, and also to the artisans of the Communist World Revolution?

The question is crucial. All experts agree that there is a limit to the amount of fissionable material that may be explosively released without creating this serious threat, both in terms of immediate destruction of life and property and also in terms of future radioactive fall-out. Within this basic agreement there will doubtless be differences of opinion on the sheer arithmetic. However, it will be most important not to let a straight-forward answer to a straight-forward question get lost amid the endless niceties of scientific argument.

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I once made an estimate myself, when I was a member of the A.E.C. My figure published in an article in Life (May 7, 1957) was 3500 megatons. The figure was not challenged either at the time or subsequently. An amount of 3500 megatons might well serve as the basis of the initial dismantling stage, which, under the agreement I envision, would cover a period of approximately three (3) years. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would agree to hand over 1750 megatons each to the international agency. It would be desirable for the U.S. to offer a substantial portion of its total share in the first stage--let us say 500 megatons--as its first consignment, to be matched by the Soviet Union.

It should be further agreed that the remaining 2500 megatons will be delivered to the international agency in matching lots at prescribed intervals within the three (3) year period. By that time it is to be hoped that the international climate will have been so improved that the negotiations of other disarmament measures will have become possible.

The political effects of carrying through these measures to end the terror that has brooded over a decade cannot fail to be beneficial to the whole international community. Of course, the deep reality of the cold war will remain untouched. But the illegitimate issue of sheer physical survival will no longer dominate the continuing rivalry between opposed forms of social and political organizations. Hence it should be possible to see more clearly the real issues--moral, political and economic--and to deal with them more firmly.

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I know that my proposal has raised misgivings in some minds. "We face an enemy," so runs the argument, "who recognizes no moral restraints in his use of force, and who will stop at nothing to gain his ends. Only terror of intolerable reprisals will deter him from aggression. Therefore, we should not surrender the weapons of terror." This argument, if valid at all, would forbid any kind of nuclear disarmament negotiations in good faith. It would condemn the world to go on living under an unstable balance of terror until the unlikely event of a Communist conversion to morality. Hence the argument reduces itself to absurdity. Moreover, it implies an abject admission that human reason is powerless to cope with evil except by stooping to evil. And it would require that we forever commit ourselves, in the name of an undefined morality, to the profound lack of moral control and to the equally profound lack of political rationality that have characterized our armament policies for the past decade. I do not recognize the validity of this kind of twisted and despairful argument. In fact, I do not think that any kind of political or moral or even military argument can be made, with any plausibility, in favor of a balance of terror as a basis of peace. Terror, induced by the threat of unlimited violence, has no place in the moral or political universe. Advocacy of unlimited violence, or consent to it, will make barbarians of us all. Our first duty as a civilized people is to banish the barbarism of terror from the place it has usurped in public policy.

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The moral cynicism of Communism is a poor excuse for maintaining a policy of terror. I readily grant that no moral scruples hinder Communism in the pursuit of its aims. But it does not follow that Communism recognizes no restraints at all on its use of force in pursuit of its aims. The supreme restraint is imposed by the very Communist dogma of world revolution which is supposed to usher in a new era of world organization, the dogma supposes that there will be a productive world and masses of peoples to organize. Hence the dogma forbids the use of unlimited nuclear violence that could imperil the sheer existence of peoples and world alike.

There is, moreover, the Communist assurance that its revolutionary advance is as inevitable as history itself. But the revolution is to advance as history advances, gradually and little by little. The capitalist camp is not to be shattered by some sudden overwhelming release of nuclear violence, let loose with no defined political purpose but only with the intention of sheer destruction.

This is not the strategy of the revolution. Rather, the revolutionary assurance is that there will be a continuing series of limited political victories, and an accumulation of limited economic conquests, and above all a growing conversion of the peoples of the world to belief in the "truth" of the Communist ideology and in the superior merits of the Communist system of social organization.

All these gradual advances will be supported at every turn by apt force, when the use or threat of it is useful or necessary for the limited end in view at the moment. This is the ever present danger that American political, military and weapons policy must confront

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and overcome. The essential problem is to possess the apt force to meet the limited threat of the moment, wherever it may arise.

However, the same Communist dogma and the same Communist assurance of inevitable success that dictate the use of apt force, if force is necessary to insure success, also set limits to the force to be used and forbid the extremes of violence. The Communist purpose is success, the political success of the revolution. Limited force is an apt means to this success. Unlimited nuclear violence is an inept means, a useless means, a far too dangerous means.

Therefore is it true to say that Communism "will stop at nothing" in the matter of the use of nuclear arms? It does recognize its own kinds of restraint. Its own dogma is a discipline on the use of force. To overlook this fact is to mistake the real peril we face. Policy designed to meet fanciful dangers is a work of fantasy, not statesmanship.

Finally, in this same connection a serious question must be raised. Is it true to say that the American policy of nuclear terror has been a success? Has the unlimited nuclear deterrent, backed by the threat of massive retaliation, achieved any real purpose, military or political? Has this policy effectively "contained" the Communist revolution? Has it stopped the Communist regimes from moving towards any of their selected goals?

No serious man may answer these questions with an unhesitating and unqualified "yes." At best, the answer can be only conjectural. And there are serious reasons for thinking that the answer ought to be "no." The main reason is that during the past decade the advance of the Communist revolution has not in fact been halted. Or, where it has suffered a check, the credit must go either to the altered course of events or to policies other than "massive retaliation."

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The argument made by the advocates of our present strategy of massive retaliation; namely, that only a policy of terror will deter the immoral communist enemy, and that therefore the surrender of our megaton weapons of terror would entail serious risk to American security, is a purely gratuitous assertion. It cannot be proved. It must be taken on faith, and hence constitutes a poor basis for a rational policy. Much better arguments than this would have to be put forward before the categoric rejection of my proposal would be justified.

The proposal does involve an element of risk, as all disarmament proposals must. But on any calculation of relative risks, especially those involved in current American armament and disarmament policy, I much prefer to accept the risk involved in my proposal. No other nuclear disarmament plan now before the American public involves a risk as minimal.